THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHAMMAD MAQBOOL DAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Journalist in question lodged a complaint with the local police that she had been abused and manhandled with intent to outrage her modesty and wrongfully confined by some members of the management of Times of India. She had further complained that the articles kept in the car had been stolen by the accused persons.

(c) A criminal case has been registered and put to investigation.

Appointments on Compassionate Grounds

1638. SHRIMATI MALTI SHARM. Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of cases of appointments on compassionate grounds are pending in the Department of Rural Development;

(b) if so, the number of cases which are pending since December, 1996 till date;

(c) the reasons therefor; and

(d) by when all the cases would be settled?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU): (a) and (b) At present only one case of appointment on compassionate grounds in the Headquarters office of this Ministry proper and 11 cases in the Directorate of Marketing and Inspection, an attached office of this Ministry are pending since December, 1996.

(c) and (d) The above cases could not be settled due to non-fulfilment of prescribed conditions e.g. availability of vacant posts under the prescribed quota for making such appointments etc.

Implementation of National Family Benefit Scheme and National Maternity Benefit Scheme

1639. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO : Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Family Benefit Scheme and National Maternity Benefit Scheme are not being properly implemented in certain States;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the other action proposed to ensure national minimum standards by all the State Governments?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU: (a) to (c) The National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) and National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS) were launched as Centrally sponsored schemes with effect from 15th August, 1995.

These were new schemes and hence a lot of ground work and publicity was required throughout the country. The State Governments took considerable time in grounding the programme and completing procedures and formalities. Releases of funds during 1995-96 under NFBS and NMBS amounted to Rs. 105 crores and Rs. 58.7 crores respectively, which was 68% and 67% respectively of the Budget Allocation, Releases under NFBS and NMBS during 1996-97 were Rs. 106.9 crores and Rs. 67.6 crores respectively, which was more or less the entire provision available for the year. However, expenditure reported by the States was at a lower level. This indicates that implementation of these two schemes has to significantly improve.

The Ministry has taken several steps such as meetings with State Ministers in charge of NSAP, individual review meetings with the State Secretaries, discussions on perceived impediments to successful implementation of the schemes in the Central Advisory Committee on NSAP and special publicity campaigns.